

THE POCAHONTAS TIMES

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CALVIN W. PRICE, Editor.

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Swiftly through another week! Still suffering from low word pressure. Know lots of things to tell, but what's the use? Had high word pressure a few years ago. Last fall wrote sixty thousand words on typewriter in ten days, and heated the bearings. Have been crippling along ever since. Too much wording done anyway. You know how it is with writers and speakers: Give them an inch and they will take an all of a long time to tell it to you. No that is not swearing. Anything but. The swearing is confined to the paw. Yes, perhaps confined to the few in the paw. An all in a yard, or as Comrade Tennyson so cunningly observed: The cheating wand. As old mother Rip-ton foretold: There shall be few in the paw and many in the car. The old rip knew what she was talking about even if she could not read any thing but the future.

I was somewhat disturbed by George Patullo's weekly article entitled "No Kin." It is a rather sad distribute on the condition of the husband. I made herself read it too, but I could not see any relenting. She disposed of the doctrine with a few well chosen words with the best of the secrets of his prison house. It grew out of the inquiry that the sewing circle made to a wise old lady. They asked her in case of a fire would she save her husband or her child. And she replied that she would save her child of course. Sug was no kin to her.

An essay for husbands to read and weep. A new interpretation of the doctrine of the white man's burden. It also throws some light on a well known ballad:

"Fireman, fireman, save my child!"
"Why not your husband, ma'am?"
said he. But mother cried in accents wild,
"John Henry is no kin to me."

This subject has something to do with the question of why no woman is ever arrested. In my long experience with the courts I have never known a case of the kind. I have seen women in custody but when the facts were sifted it appeared that the defendant had agreed to come along. There was one case that it was attempted but she kicked the official's shins until the mere man was like the hunter who had the bear by the tail, who could neither let go nor hold on.

Label: We had a hard problem. It became necessary to let a lady know that there was law in the land and it was a perilous proposition. It seemed that in this instance the lady had strange powers. She could grab a hair out of the top of a man's head, put it in a bottle, and say a few words, and after that the spell was on him, and it was all up with him, and he was no good in this world. But there was a way out. We enlisted the efficient aid of Officer L. S. Cochran, who for years has been bald like a billiard ball, and he went in and had a few words with her, and fixed it all up.

And here we take up the liftable stick presented to us by Squire Sutton, of Cass, who writes under the date of February 27th:

"In your editorial of last week, you mention the names of two Moses Moores, of pioneer days. It is a well established fact that one of the two you mentioned was captured by the Indians on this side of the Allegheny and was tied to a tree at a spring near the J. J. McLaughlin farm, on the east side of Cheat Mountain, and his captors left him for a short period of time. When they returned they had procured a liberal supply of lead. It is also handed down by tradition that the red men mined gold and silver at what is commonly known as the Mine Bank. This is an almost perpendicular precipice of slate and ore bearing stones, lying on the south side of the North Fork of Deer Creek from G. B. Slaven's to W. H. Wood-dell's. They had their furnace in the head of the hollow back of the Warwick farm, just east of the iron bridge which crosses Deer Creek. Unless I am mistaken the exact location of the furnace can be shown by J. L. Warwick, or F. H. Warwick. The peculiar formation of the two small hills or mounds mentioned some months ago lies near the so called mine bank, a drawing of which is a matter of record on the large stone on Elk Mountain, which was shown me around fifteen years ago. I think if some of our ambitious young bloods who are literally bubbling over with enthusiasm (and rain water) would spend some of their energies in studying practical geology instead of stepping on the gas and hiving high old time, that they would uncover many valuable ores in good old Pocahontas county."

The squire invites me to go exploring with him next summer, an invitation which I hope to be able to accept. So the first good rainbow season that comes may find us on expeditions having a scientific tone.

The Moses Moores that he speaks of was captured during the Revolutionary war on the Greenbrier River. Talk to a Greenbank man and he will tell you that he was taken in that district, and that the mine is as described in Squire Sutton's letter. Talk to a Edray district man and he will claim that he was taken near the Indian Rock between Marlinton and Clover Lick, and that the red men went up near where Elk Mountain and Clover Creek Mountain join, and there got all the lead that they could conveniently carry.

I have to sort to stick up for the Edray honor and in this I follow my Uncle James Henry Price. My father, the historian, accepts the tradition of the Greenbank location, basing it largely on the name of the beautiful little stream coming into Greenbrier river known as Moses Spring Run. And that gives them the edge on that.

On the other hand, Moses Moore's home was a place called the Rich-lands on the waters of Knappa Creek and the place near Indian Rock was just a few miles west of his cabin. Almost any mineral can be found

In Pocahontas county, and it has never been properly tested for minerals. The mountains are very ancient. Nearly all the valleys and the mountains have been formed by the slow work of erosion. We can show many mountains where the strata is like a floor. And the dipping is regular from one mountain to another, so that a strata can be followed across the hollow by the eye. In this part of the country the mountains are with us yet. To the northwest they have wasted away until the country is more like a peneplain, where the land surface has been reduced by erosion almost to base level, so that much of it is nearly plain.

It is unfortunate that Pocahontas county has not been more thoroughly examined by geologists. They have treated this section as being identical with the lands either east of us, or those west of us. That may not be the case. In other words we cannot be like the Virginia mountains and the coal and oil fields both, for those sections are as much unlike as natural formations can well be.

It is common to find rich specimens of lead ore and if the mother lode could be located there might be rich mines. But all that we can do is to pick up along some stream a bit of lead ore, send it away to be analyzed, and be told that it is high grade ore, practically pure lead, and then wonder where it came from. You know it is this way: A mountain formed by erosion has a coating of detritus as much as a hundred feet. In some instances, and it is hard to tell what is under it.

Tradition says that William Young located the lead mine on the waters of Williams River, and took the secret with him. It is hard to say when the lead mine will be found.

Prospecting is not encouraged by the eastern states. In the west prospecting is a regular business and it is encouraged by the laws. There if a mine is found, the discoverer is entitled to locate a certain boundary, and mine it irrespective of the ownership of the land. For instance in Nevada, the prospector sets up his monuments taking a strip of land 300 feet by 1500 feet, something over ten acres, and he registers this claim in the courthouse, and if it is his until he abandons it and goes to do a certain amount of work on it. States like Arizona, New Mexico, and Colorado have similar laws. I do not want to pose as an authority on mining laws of the west, as it is mostly gathered from stories written in the anthracite school of the east. My understanding is that about all the owner of the big grant can do to control the prospector is to record some reasonable rules as to the use of his land by the tramping fraternity who are seeking gold and silver. For forty years I have been reading prospector stories and been trying to get time to go to the desert and get me burros and find me a gold mine with which to meet current expenses. But there never has been a time that I could drop my work long enough to go. I would like to go and locate mine after mine and I would name them in alphabet order: Annanias, Heizebut, Caliban, Demon, Error, Faust, Gehenna, Hades, and the like, so nobody need take stock in them without warning.

It would not hurt West Virginia, which has old mountains compared to the Rocky Mountain region, to provide for the gentle art of prospecting, so that the discoverer of valuable mineral should have a reward for his work. Certainly landowners ought not to object to having searches of this kind made, when they are too busy to do it themselves, and too poor to hire a geologist, or too suspicious of them. They have got the game and fish so hedged about and all the woods so closed, that unless you want to hunt wildflowers or take photographs the woods are like a sealed book.

Why not then turn the sportsmen loose in the woods to follow the new sport of prospecting and have all the excitement and glory of sport that they once knew?

This winter an enthusiast came to me on the train and talked for miles of the places he knew that held deposits of valuable minerals, and that he did not propose to tell anybody anything unless he was protected in some way in the discovery.

I was not impressed with the weight of his claims. I would not have given him a plugged dime for all the mines that he had ever discovered, but I do not want to cry down the possibilities of mineral wealth in this country that we live in around the headwaters of the eleven rivers. We all know that some day they will be in great demand. If this county was set down in the middle of England, every landowner would be a millionaire. There are so many rich mineral deposits in America that it is only the favored few that are in demand. But a few mountains here and there are no bad heritages to have in the family.

Every now and then some weather beaten gent shows up in Marlinton and tells us that he is a prospector and we do not take much stock in him, for we have seen so many of his kind. They generally have an axe to grind but their demands are usually very small. Grubstake them for a short trip and the romances that

they produce are worth the money. My own dreams are of oil. I feel always right and day that we are living over great pools of oil that some day will be discovered and brought to light. Then there will be plenty of money and the road to the bad place will be thoroughly well greased, and many a foot will slip.

Last summer I was driving along a country road with a bunch of the hard boiled and the road dipped down in a little sway of a place, and I stopped the car and said to the party: "There was oil flowing out at a place in this hollow, thirty-nine years ago. I am going to see if it is still flowing." And I got down and went to the place and the same greasy mud of a variegated color was there, just as it was so many years ago.

One of the most persistent searches that we know any thing about is the anthracite coal along the west bank of the Greenbrier River. You can find traces of it from here to Caldwell. It is the only West Virginia coal that I know of which is to be found under the Big Lime Joseph Beury, Sr., the great millionaire coal man of Fayette, used to ask about it every time that I saw him. And he said that he fully intended to come up here and see if he could locate it in paying quantities. But he departed this life more than twenty years ago without coming. I do not know much about anthracite but I have gathered a few impressions, which may or may not be correct. My first inspection was when the late Col. T. F. Callison opened up a tunnel in the mountain at the end of Droop well down to the river level. This was timbered up in a thoroughly workmanlike manner by a practical miner. I crawled back into it some three hundred feet as it seemed to me and saw the seam faced up. A person could travel on the hands and knees. That year this coal was mined in Hillsboro. I saw it burn in an ordinary grate and it made a hot fire. It was colored with the sulphur content. My understanding is that anthracite is pre-paring for the market by breaking it into small lumps and by thoroughly washing the sulphur out of it. I have not heard of any of our local prospectors having put this coal through a process of breaking it and washing it.

still burning and that was the way in which anthracite was discovered. It is a greek word meaning coal. Its main difference from soft coal is that anthracite does not contain volatile matter such as gas. In fact the absence of smoke is its best recommendation. Those of us who have been raised on red ashes coal would about as leave try to burn limestone as anthracite, but it is wonderfully popular in the north and the anthracite operators have viewed with alarm the introduction of soft coal during the labor troubles lately worrying Pennsylvania.

What we need is a homemade geologist. Or some mountain born scientist. All of our scientists seem to have been raised in the lowlands and they come out here for a few days and get a crick in the neck looking up at the big mountains, and then flee from them, and write discouraging reports, that make me angry, until we have a sad quarrel like Virginia and the elders.

It seems to me that there is sense in Squire Sutton's suggestion to young men to prospect the country. There is more pleasure in seeking than in finding as gay old bird once told me. Outside of the farms which are necessarily formed of the detritus that has made the soil, this county has never been explored. There are thousands of miles of waterways in the primitive wilderness that ought to be examined.

Like one of those California tales. At a place in the gold mining country the place the miners lived and the miners climbed up from the riverbed to the terrace that the cabins were on. Halfway up was a small boulder that lay by the path and it was a favorite resting place. The miner would sit on the boulder and smoke and rest. After this had been going on for months, a miner hit the boulder with his hammer and found that it was mostly gold, and he took it down the mountain and sold it for thirty thousand dollars.

There may come a time when there will be call for our minerals. Just like the old war times when they ran short of powder and came here and got saltpeter out of some of the local caves.

The reason back of the statutes of the desert states in regard to prospectors is no doubt to encourage discoverers of minerals that may be mined and thus bring wealth and people into the State. I see no reason why a mountain state like West Virginia might not at least recognize the art of prospecting, and some of us who could not go ourselves might grubstake some boy and let him find out what is in these hills, if anything. I should think that most landowners would welcome an idea of this kind, and it could be so worded that any landowner who did not like it could withdraw his lands from exploration.

Since getting a flood of fire bills during the last week or so, landowners in this county are wondering what next and who owns these here lands anyway?

Someone down at Watoga below Marlinton has opened up a tunnel this winter. It is plain to be seen from the train windows. I do not know what they found, but I have no doubt that they found coal. My understanding is that anthracite is looked for in pockets sometimes extending thousands of feet into the earth. The old timers called it stone coal to distinguish it from soft coal. And it was formerly considered to be useless for fuel purposes. The story is that a man driving a covered wagon in Pennsylvania camped for the night along the road, and desiring to cook his supper made a fire place out of some dark colored stones lying around his camping place. That when he returned the next day he found that his fire place had taken fire and was

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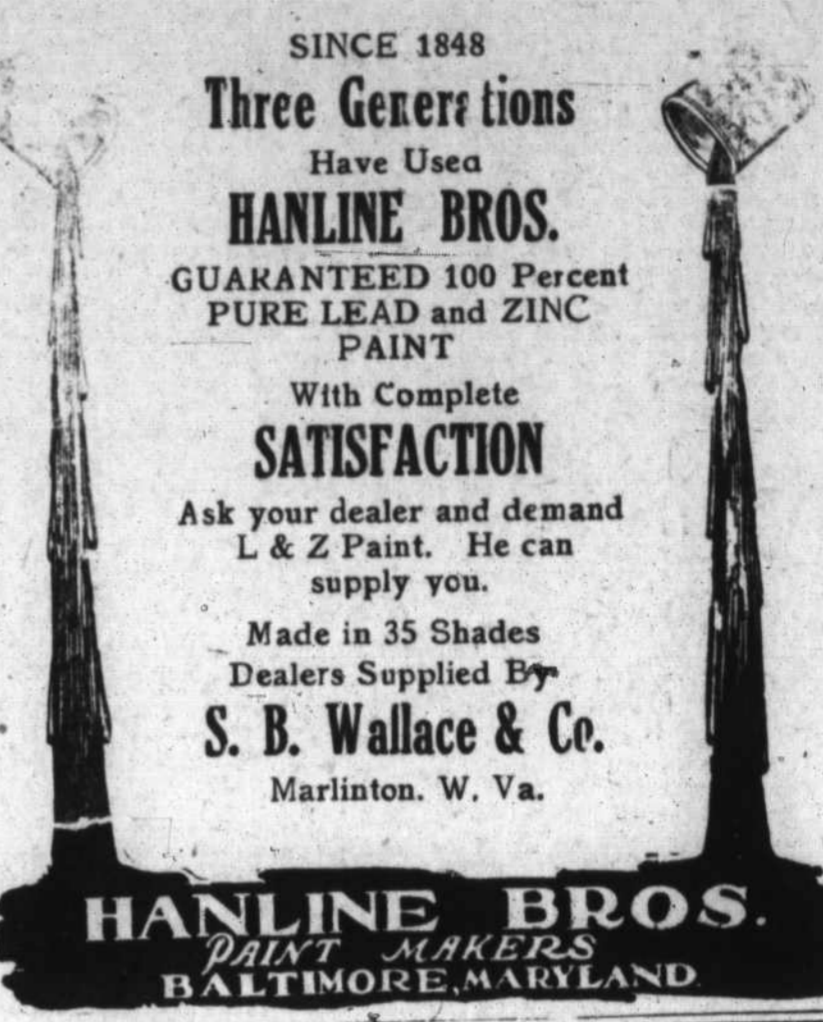
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